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**Paul Emmanuel's *Transitions*: The White South African Male in Process.**

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**Paul Emmanuel's *Transitions*: The White South African Male in Process**  
**By Pamela Allara**

**Five sequences of five drawings on exposed photographic paper; each sequence 730 x 3,050 mm framed. Collection: Spier Contemporary Collection, Stellenbosch, South Africa**

Between the years 2005 and 2008, South African artist Paul Emmanuel made a series of photographs of male rituals that he subsequently sequenced into five narrative 'scenarios'; he then exposed photographic printing paper until it was completely black, and painstakingly copied the photographs he had selected by incising the emulsion with a small, sharp, steel blade. The artist's stated aim in creating *Transitions* was to discover latent meanings beyond the photographs' surface information. As Emmanuel explained in an interview, "What was I actually witnessing? What is a 'rite of passage' and how have similar 'rituals' helped to form and perpetuate identities and belief systems throughout history? Why was I so powerfully drawn to and transfixed by these dramatic spectacles of subtle change and moments of suspended possibility and impossibility?" (1)

Although each image involved months of painstaking work, Emmanuel's artmaking was anything but a mechanical process; rather, he would select an image from a given shoot, and he would then, as he explained, begin "... to compose, edit and scratch. My next decision on which direction to take the next scenario would then ensue, sometimes with much anxiety about choice and commitment." (2) In other words, the narrative construction of what in effect became film stills, was the result of continuous editing and working back and forth between the initial photographs and the final drawings. By his insistence on stilling and then sequencing a transient moment, Emmanuel suspended time and opened the images to contemplation. In photographic terms, he moved from the snapshot to the time exposure, from the splitting of time into past and future, to the imprisoning of a moment in the past, with its resultant feelings of loss. (3) The time required to gaze at the depicted rites becomes a meditation on the complex issue of how 'manhood' or 'masculinity' is constructed over the course of a lifetime in traditional, white, patriarchal South African culture. As realized after three years of continual effort, *Transitions* consists of five framed sequences of five drawings spanning life's passages. In between 'infancy' and 'old age' are two 'rites' – heterosexual marriage and military induction -- that contribute to the structuring of male identity, keeping it on track so to speak, (fig. 1).



**Fig. 1** [installation]

*Paul Emmanuel: Transitions*

National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution

May 12 – August 22, 2010

Photo: Franko Khoury

When installed, the framed drawings are suspended from the gallery's ceiling, signaling to the viewer the theme of suspended time, and hinting as well at the possibility of the suspension of firm gender identity boundaries. As conceptions of a unified masculinity yield to masculinities, which are not biologically determined but performed, conventional associations of manhood with attributes such as aggressiveness and heterosexuality begin to weaken. (4) For Emmanuel, who is neither heterosexual nor macho, witnessing the process of redefining masculine identity in South Africa was apparently a topic worthy of intense scrutiny, a meditation that was at once devotional and obsessive. One might expect anger or at least sarcasm to intrude at some point during this monumental effort, but that is not the case. His drawings reproduce the close framing of his photographs, but his sitters are not provided with faces that might be subjected to distortion or caricature. We see the men – with the exception of the innocent baby – only from the rear, or, more precisely, in *profil perdu*, (lost profile), where they are the object of certain operations designed to confirm male roles. The anonymity and passivity of the figures consistently undercut received notions of masculinity, and permit the viewer to scrutinize these staid, motionless busts while suspending our own preconceptions about manhood.

The four ritual operations depicted signal the four ages of man: infancy (circumcision) youth (military service), adulthood (marriage), and old age (a 90th birthday toast). Each of these operations is celebrated in many cultures by religious rites, but only one of the series, the marriage, depicts an actual religious ceremony. The fact that, according to Emmanuel, viewers have insisted on attaching religious associations (5) to all of them is indicative of the power of the cultural rituals of gender indoctrination worldwide. Certainly, the three years of obsessive, unrelenting labor could be said to constitute an almost religious sacrifice on the artist's part. In depicting these 'ceremonies,' Emmanuel emphasized the subjects' willing acceptance of this aura of identity, variously shaped by external hands. They will not resist; they will stay centered within a bounded arena, as indicated by the aureole surrounding each head. As we witness the process, we are offered the space to speculate about what is going on inside those heads. Biology seems to have relatively little to do with the cultural indoctrination that readies these individuals to perform their masculinities. What happens during these operations – reinforcement, or genuine transformation? How do we know what it is we are seeing? We are challenged by the installation to attempt to answer for ourselves the very question Emmanuel

was asking.

Just as the images are physically suspended, so the nature of the medium remains suspended. Are these photographs or drawings? These paper-based works refuse any firm designation. These images of masculine rites are constructed from this matrix of the both/and, making their way to illusionistic representations only through the force of the artist's obsessive mark-making. One might speculate that his sharp blade was engaged in a sort of battle with the drawn ones held by the officials who act upon the initiates. The predominance of the color white throughout the series – in the clothing, in the blurred forms, and in the surrounding 'halos' – points to an inescapable fact: this represented white-male-ness has been created out of the all-black matrix of the exposed photographic paper. In Africa, and indeed throughout the world, what Melissa Steyn has called the Master Narrative of Whiteness – of its cultural, biological, economic and political superiority – could only be constructed in opposition to the invented negative valence of blackness. Emmanuel has stated that "bringing up the drawing from nothingness to something is the thing I'm subconsciously attracted to," (6) perhaps because of a Catholic fascination with transubstantiation. But here the blackness is not nothingness, but the generative ground out of which an identifiable figure – the white male – can emerge. (7)

In the first two images of the circumcision sequence, the infant's body is sharply foreshortened: the newborn is an object in the process of becoming a subject. In the final three images, the baby's body is laid out horizontally: 'subject' to whatever is to come. Hands holding a sharp medical implement grasp, and then cut the foreskin of the tiny penis, while in response to this bodily invasion, the infant barely opens its eyes, (fig. 2).



**Figure 2.** [circumcision]  
First drawing sequence from *Transitions* titled (1)  
2005 - 2008  
Hand-incised, exposed, processed photographic paper  
730 x 3,050 mm (framed)  
Courtesy Spier Contemporary Collection



**Figure 2. (detail)** [circumcision]

Third image from the first drawing sequence from *Transitions* titled (1)

2005 - 2008

Hand-incised, exposed, processed photographic paper

730 x 3,050 mm (framed)

Courtesy Spier Contemporary Collection

He/It is the very picture of innocence, vulnerability and lack of agency: the child will be made in the image of the phallic father well before the age of consent. Imposed 'in the name of the father' (8) by mechanical tools much larger and more powerful than the biological member, identity is created before individual consciousness. As Prof. Achille Mbembe has noted, "the centrality of the phallus in the process of symbolising life, power and pleasure" (9) is characteristic of African culture both in his native Cameroon and in South Africa, and equally in white culture as well.

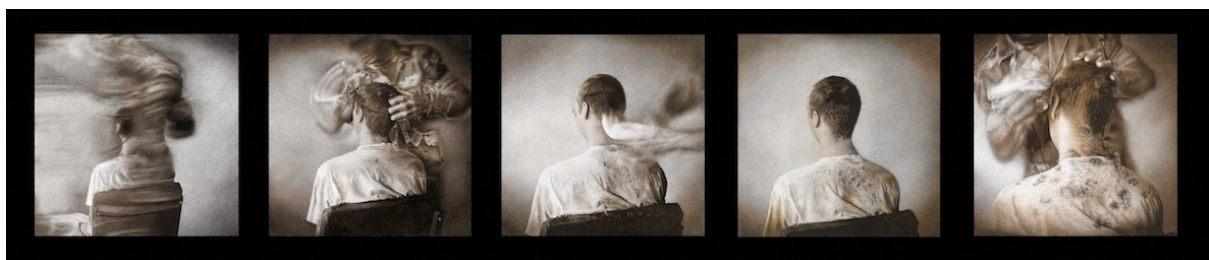
In the two images involving cutting, the baby's torso is covered with a blanket, underscoring its liminal state. In the final image, the isolated body of the peacefully sleeping child is fully exposed to view, presented as certifiably male. Strangely, his face is grey, as if dead to the possibilities that have now been 'cut off.' Moreover, the mound-like shapes of the penis and navel are juxtaposed, as if to proclaim that the maternal umbilical cord, which has given life, now has a powerful rival. The fringe of a skirt-like blanket that appears to 'grow' from the baby's testicles proclaims its newly privileged status, one that will henceforth be reinforced through the adornment of uniforms. Lacanians rejoice! The intimate connection with the mother need not wait to be severed until the child gains language and ascends to the Phallogentric order; circumcision alone will do the job. Still, doubts linger. If the



female represents 'castration' in the realm of twentieth century psychoanalysis, what has just happened to this infant? Could those imposing implements have eliminated more than just a tiny bit of foreskin?

Constructing masculinity appears to be a very delicate, if invasive, operation. Viewers can only interpret what Emmanuel has represented from the context of their own 'points of view.' For my own part, I see a wound, which, despite the honorific fringe that insists on the genitals' hormonal power, may never be healed psychologically, and may be in constant tension with the evidence of its origins in the female body. The navel at the summit of the baby's torso is the indelible evidence of the biological 'default drive' of the female from which each XY fetus must begin its perilous journey toward 'manhood.' (10)

Having now been identified by the 'powers that be' as male, certain choices are open to the growing boy that are more likely than not to reinforce received ideas of 'masculinity.' The culture of the military, with its training in violence, remains quintessentially masculine, despite the recent acceptance of women into its ranks. However, what Emmanuel presents is not the idealized image of the steely paragon of courage, but a guy having his head shaved, (fig. 3). (11)



**Figure 3.** [military]

Second drawing sequence from *Transitions* titled (2)

2005 - 2008

Hand-incised, exposed, processed photographic paper

730 x 3,050 mm (framed)

Courtesy Spier Contemporary Collection



**Figure 3. (detail)** [military]

Micro-detail from the fifth image from the second drawing sequence from *Transitions* titled (2)

2005 - 2008

Hand-incised, exposed, processed photographic paper

730 x 3,050 mm (framed)

Courtesy Spier Contemporary Collection

Coincidentally, Stanley Kubrick's "Full Metal Jacket," (1987), the late auteur's searing indictment of the Vietnam War, opens with the same symbolic scene: the close-up of the shorn hair falling to the floor clearly representing a kind of castration through the stripping away of individuality and its replacement by a blank slate/pate. The unleashing of violence and mayhem that follows in Kubrick's film is absent in Emmanuel's poetic narratives, however, both in this sequence and in the accompanying award-winning film "3SAI: A Rite of Passage", (fig. 4). (12)



**Figure 4.**

Still from **3SAI: A Rite of Passage**

2008

Single channel, hi-definition video, 14 minutes

Courtesy Format Digital Productions © Paul Emmanuel

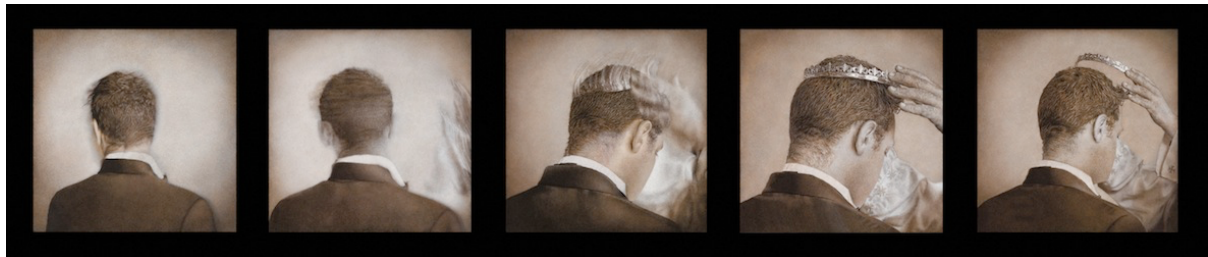
Apart from the suspended installation, the ritualized subject matter, the cropped compositions, and the obsessive process, the use of focus is also central to Emmanuel's investigation. The blurred forms of the several operatives who preside over these rites are the deities of change. In this second sequence, a young person in a white t-shirt is engulfed by a headless apparition who swoops in, and firmly holding the subject's head in his hands, crops his hair. As in the infant narrative, these shaping hands are not so much authoritarian as professional and inexorable. In the fourth image, the new recruit is alone, this cutting ritual apparently complete. Yet, in the fifth and last image, which appears to be 'out of order', the officer/barber returns with his razor, and far greater amounts of hair than had been on his head previously tumble down the subject's neck and back. The fact that Emmanuel deliberately disrupts the linear narrative of the haircut permits him to refocus the viewer's attention to the hanks of hair, which now begin to mirror the camouflage pattern of the officer's jacket. The recruit is adopting the coloring and patterning of his new tribe. Emmanuel's artistic process, akin to the tattoo artist's piercing of the subject's skin, here becomes a metaphor for scarification or branding. Emmanuel's initial query, "These liminal moments of transition, when a young man – whether voluntarily or forced – lets go of one identity and takes on a new identity as State Property with an assigned Force Number, prompted me to ask many questions..." is answered in this instance by the absorption of one individual body into a second, collective one.

Emmanuel's fixation on his subjects' hair, a necessary focus in the absence of facial features, elicits not only admiration for his extraordinary draftsmanship, but also a larger meditation on hair's cultural



meanings. Gender associations abound, but it is the myth of Samson that predominates in this second sequence; once shorn, the young man appears at the very least unable to counter the force that envelops him. Again, the question arises of whether we are witnessing the making of a man or a castration – or whether the construction of masculinity of necessity involves castration, the killing of individuality's potential deviance. This ambiguity surely is in part what Emmanuel asks us to witness.

In the third sequence, the marriage ceremony, (fig. 5), the male's head is larger, ruddier and less vulnerable in appearance than that of the head of the new recruit.



**Figure 5.** [marriage]

Third drawing from *Transitions* titled (3)

2005 - 2008

Hand-incised, exposed, processed photographic paper

730 x 3,050 mm (framed)

Courtesy Spier Contemporary Collection

The groom looks left, presumably at his (unrepresented) bride, and then turns right to receive a silver crown from a pair of hands draped with white ceremonial regalia embroidered with a cross. According to Emmanuel, this is a Lebanese Maronite Catholic Church ceremony; (13) like other Christian marriage ceremonies that include crowning, the gesture most likely symbolizes the 'virtue and holiness to live their lives to the glory of almighty God.' If it is unclear whether the infant's circumcision is a religious ceremony or a medical procedure, here the religious symbols are unmistakable, even if their meaning is ambiguous. The kingly crown rests on the male's head in the 4th image, and then is lifted off and suspended above his head in the final image. His very brief reign may indicate that the subject's submission of his life to a higher power is transient, or that the spiritual force of the blessing provided by the crown is removed as quickly as it is bestowed. We cannot know for certain, nor can we discern what this crowning might be saying about the nature of his relationship with the invisible partner. Is Emmanuel possibly referencing gay marriage, legalized in 2006 while the drawings were being made, but opposed by the Catholic Church? (14) Or, is he referencing the rapidly growing white patriarchal movement in South Africa?

A recent conservative blog has described a large rally in KZN by the Shalom Ministries, headed by Angus Buchan, as follows: "In [his 2010] Mighty Men Conference, Buchan challenged [white] men to become... 'Godly leaders in their homes and to rid themselves of such sins as adultery, fornication, and hatred.' As Buchan says, 'Men have got to start to stand up and take their rightful place in their home, which is as prophet, priest, and king.' He then goes on to explain, in layman's terms, that this means to put food on the table, protect their wives, and discipline their children." (15) The blogger's summary of the South African Mighty Men movement provides the classic definition of patriarchy, which under pressures of global capitalism – an impersonal form of domination-- has been in decline for at least a generation. (16) "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," or fears its loss. (17) The "uncertain, fragile and politically disempowered" nature of white masculinity leads invariably to the attempt to reinforce traditional gender roles and the heterosexual imperative. (18)

In the last of the rituals, an elderly man, dressed in white, rises from a chair to toast his 90 year-old father, while a caretaker, identifiable as black, helps him on with his dark jacket (fig. 6).



**Figure 6.** [birthday toast]  
Fourth drawing from *Transitions* titled (4)  
2005 - 2008  
Hand-incised, exposed, processed photographic paper  
730 x 3,050 mm (framed)  
Courtesy Spier Contemporary Collection

Once again Emmanuel bestows on the event the solemnity of religious ritual. The beautiful still life of the wine glass and plate on the table next to him brings to mind Northern Renaissance devotional paintings, and so the reference to the Holy Sacrament is unavoidable, even if the 'communion' here happens to be dinner at a restaurant. The bent body of the man, suspended between seated and standing, is transparent in places, suggesting that he himself is in transition toward death. In the final image, another blurred body – according to Emmanuel, that of a waiter – envelops him, as if in a shroud. Given the blunt fact of vast numbers of AIDS-related deaths, predominantly of blacks, in South Africa, the sight of a white male being gently ushered into death by a black 'angel,' is far from comforting.

If, as Mbembe has written, "White racism in an era of legal racial equality [has] had to don new clothes," (19) here the hierarchical positions of black to white appear unchanged. In Emmanuel's depiction, the strong arm of the black helper steadies the wavering torso of the old white man, permitting him to retain his status/stance, even as his visible authority begins to dissolve. The inexorable shaping hands of the three previous images now become supportive; to the extent that the white male retains his former authority and social status, it is because his position is sustained by black labor. The two people do not face each other; there is no acknowledgement of the other. Inequality has "... prevented any true sense of proximity, reciprocity or similarity...so much so that the biggest obstacle to the project of nonracialism [is] the difficulty – experienced both by Blacks and Whites – of seeing in the other the face of a fellow human..." (20) At the end of an era of transition (1990-2010), elderly white South Africans, as evidenced here, may be able go to their graves without having to face the inevitability of change.

The fifth sequence of Emmanuel's *Transitions* moves abruptly from individual moments of change/reinforcement into the public realm, (fig. 7).



**Figure 7.** [station]  
Fifth drawing from *Transitions* titled (5)  
2005 - 2008  
Hand-incised, exposed, processed photographic paper  
730 x 3,050 mm (framed)  
Courtesy Spier Contemporary Collection

The images depict a railroad/bus terminal, with groups entering and exiting through turnstiles. (21) Presumably the initial photographs were made on a rainy day, as some of the figures are shrouded in raincoats, their blurred ghostly shapes the result of the time exposure as well as their own movement. As we viewers mentally join the spectral crowd on their daily commute, their quotidian travels, we are



invited to confront the rites of passage in our own lives, as well as our own mortality. It is a coda that might appear to be a digression from the topic of the construction of white South African masculinity, but that in the end acknowledges that gender identity is itself should be acknowledged as "...the unstable, never-secured effect of a process of enunciation of cultural difference..." (22) But as Cornel West cautions in the same 'Identity' issue of the journal *October* I have just quoted: "...identity is about bodies, land, labor, and instruments of production. It's about distribution of resources." (23) In Emmanuel's turnstile image we are plunged into the vortex of the laboring masses, themselves driven by economic forces outside their control.

Emmanuel's sustained exploration in *Transitions* of the nature of white male identity can be read quite broadly, as there are few if any visual cues to the South African context in which they were made. Yet in the field of global contemporary art, knowledge of the artist's race, nationality and culture is often a prerequisite for beginning the process of interpretation. If such information courts the danger of the viewer's reducing the artwork to the level of illustration, in the best of cases, this initial knowledge base opens up interpretative possibilities rather than closing them down. As I thought about this work, I could not separate it from the South African context, and the quite specific constructions of masculinity that its troubled history has generated.

White South African male identity has been and continues to be a topic of widespread academic interest during and after the 'transition' from apartheid to democracy. It has been a major concern in South African contemporary art for the past two decades as well, with William Kentridge's profound examination of the white South African male's divided self the most obvious example at hand. As sociologist Melissa Steyn has pointed out in *Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used to Be* (2001), her study of the changing construction of race with the change from white minority to black majority rule: "South Africans, willingly or unwillingly, successfully or unsuccessfully, are engaged in one of the most profound collective psychological adjustments happening in the contemporary world. (24) "Whereas in the past "White meant privileged", (25) with the advent of majority rule, whiteness has been undergoing a radical redefinition. Some may attempt to continue their privileged lives in denial of the ongoing repercussions of white racism; others seek to dismantle previous identities and build new ones: "acknowledging and dealing with the guilt, grieving for lost opportunities and one's own damaged humanity, learning to engage seriously with the life world of the 'other,' [and] taking responsibility for developing a new subjectivity..." (26) As Steyn argues, the process of adjustment entails multiple losses: of autonomy and control, of a sense of relevance, of guaranteed legitimacy, and significantly, of a loss of face. (27) Small wonder that we see no faces in Emmanuel's installation, and are left to question what narratives of virility and whiteness the men are or are not 'facing up to.'

Rather than merely a coda, the final sequence is in fact central, because the blurred figures put the stasis of the preceding four 'initiates' in context; in a period of continual change, these males appear to hold on to familiar roles such as soldier or head of household, maintaining them even as the meaning of their actions is emptying out. The use of the time exposure and the frosty textured surfaces reinforce the tense of these protagonists: The Past. However, even if we are inclined to conclude that they are representatives of a rear guard of "Mighty Men," nonetheless their suspended conditions leave open other possibilities. The blurred demon-dieties can appear to represent the forces of historical reaction, or that of spiritual transformation. The turnstiles beckon, and there are many routes out.

In conclusion, it is important to remember the complex process through which these images emerged. Despite their initial appearance, these are not casual snapshots of routine events. (28) The drawings are meditations on loss, and their power resides in their insistence that no matter how necessary and inevitable the redefinition and re-positioning of white South African manhood may be, the 'transition' will continue to be difficult, even painful. (29) It is possible that many viewers of "Transitions" have glanced at the installation without 'seeing' that is, absorbing, what Emmanuel witnessed, just as most people go through life without questioning received notions of gender or race, even when these fundamental concepts are radically changing. Whatever their designated racial or gender classifications, South Africans are hardly alone in 'facing' these challenges.

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## References & footnotes

(1) "Conversations on the Transience of Light" (Art Source South Africa, 2008). [www.paulemmanuel.net/exhibitions/pastexhibitions/.../Transitions.pdf](http://www.paulemmanuel.net/exhibitions/pastexhibitions/.../Transitions.pdf)

(2) Email correspondence with the artist, 11 July 2010.

(3) See Thierry de Duve, "Time Exposure and Snapshot: The Photograph as Paradox," October 5 (Summer, 1978), 113-125. He writes that the time exposure "...is to be understood as a pause in time...which will eventually be carried out by speech (or memory as interior speech), and is most probably rooted in the time-consuming act of looking. The aesthetic ideal of time exposure is thus a slightly *out-of-focus*." (p. 121)

(4) The academic field of masculinity studies is burgeoning, especially in the United States; standard texts include Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (1995/2006) and R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (1995/2005). Both argue that masculinity is culturally constructed rather than biologically-based, and as a result there is no single, 'essential' masculinity.

(5) Email correspondence with the artist, 27 June 2010.

(6) Quoted in Alex Dodd, "Paul Emmanuel perfects the fine art of turning oddness into transcendence," *Sunday Independent*, March 2, 2003, p. 11.

(7) Emmanuel's earlier mezzotints also were worked from black to white. It is interesting that other white South African artists, including Paul Stopforth and Kim Berman have also worked from a black 'negative' ground.

(8) According to Emmanuel, "...the circumcision is purely secular and cosmetic at the Park Lane Clinic here in Johannesburg, actually with baby being circumcised just to "look like dad." Email correspondence, 27 June 2010. In black South African cultures, circumcision takes place at puberty, and is accompanied by elaborate rituals that have provided the content for works by Nicholas Hlobo, Theminkosi Goniwe and others. It is possible that some tensions between the Xhosa and the Zulu result in part from the fact that the latter have traditionally remained uncircumcised. However, circumcision is now understood as an important means of preventing the spread of HIV. When Jacob Zuma, a Zulu, publically announced that he had been circumcised (*New York Times*, May 10, 2010), he broke through an enormous cultural barrier to confronting of the epidemic.

(9) Achille Mbembe, "Why Am I Here?" in *At Risk: Writing on and over the edge of South Africa*, Liz McGregor and Sarah Nuttall, eds. (Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2007), p. 154.

(10) See Anne Fausto-Sterling, "How to Build a Man," in *Constructing Masculinity*. Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson, eds. (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), esp. pp. 127-130. Fausto-Sterling offers the following chilling example of the construction of masculinity by the medical establishment offered by the journal *Current Problems in Surgery* (1991): "Genetic females should always be raised as females, preserving reproductive potential, regardless of how severely the patients are virilized. In the genetic male, however, the gender of assignment is based on the infant's anatomy, predominantly the size of the phallus." The 'cut-off' point is 0.6 inches; the penis and testes are removed, a vagina constructed and the infant raised as female, (pp. 131-131).

(11) Here, the use of *profil perdu* metaphorically places the young man in the ranks of *The Lost Men* (2004-2007), Emmanuel's memorial to those who died in South Africa's many territorial wars. By embossing the names of the fallen on his own body, he examined misguided ideas of masculinity, specifically those of violent conquest, but mourns the loss of individual lives nonetheless.

(12) The fourteen-minute film includes both black and white men. Although the approximately eight 'recruits' are made soldiers by the process of shaving, they paradoxically do not lose their individuality, despite Emmanuel's qualms about the military. Because they face forward, the film sensitively records a series of portraits, the last of whom poignantly says 'thanks, eh?' to the Soft Sheen Professional haircutter, the only words spoken by the recruits in the film.

(13) Email correspondence with the artist, 27 June 2010

(14) Wikipedia provides this information: "**Same-sex marriage** became legal in South Africa on 30 November 2006 when the *Civil Unions Bill* was enacted after having been passed by the South African Parliament earlier that month. A ruling by the Constitutional Court on 1 December 2005 had imposed a deadline of 1 December 2006 to make same-sex marriage legal. South Africa became the fifth country, the first in Africa, and the second outside Europe, to legalize same-sex marriage." Accessed 6 July 2010.

(15) Jessie Powell, "The Thinking Housewife: White Patriarchy in South Africa," blog [www.thinkinghousewife.com](http://www.thinkinghousewife.com), accessed 6 July 2010. The site defends 'traditional values.'

(16) See Barbara Ehrenreich, "The Decline of Patriarchy," in *Constructing Masculinity*, Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson, eds. (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 284-90.

(17) The Promise Keepers Movement is the equivalent in the United States.

(18) See Georgie Horrell, "Post-Apartheid Disgrace: Guilty Masculinities in White South African Writing," *Literature Compass* 2 (2005), pp. 1-11.

(19) Achille Mbembe, "Whiteness without Apartheid: the limits of racial freedom," openDemocracy ([www.opendemocracy.org.za](http://www.opendemocracy.org.za)) 4 July 2007.

(20) Mbembe in McGregor and Nuttall, p. 162

(21) It is the Park Street Station in downtown Johannesburg. Emmanuel relates the following: "Nearly got arrested trying to take the photographs because the station is divided into two managing agents on either side of the turnstiles, which occupy a kind of "no-man's land" in between the two platforms. The first time I did a shoot, I had permission to shoot on the side; I had positioned my camera and tripod, pointed at the turnstiles, and the floormen from the other side came and threatened to confiscate my equipment because they considered the turnstiles as their property! Eventually I got permission from both sides and everything went smoothly at last." Email correspondence, 13 July 2010.

(22) Joan w. Scott, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity," *October* 61 (summer, 1992), p. 19

(23) Cornel West, "A Matter of life and death," *October* 61, p. 21. Although the symposium on "Identity" on which this journal issue is based is almost two decades old, West's comments remain relevant today, both in South Africa and in the United States.

(24) Melissa Steyn, "*Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used To Be*," *White Identity in a Changing South Africa*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), xxi.

(25) Steyn, p. 53

(26) Steyn, p. 142; Steyn's book addresses whiteness in general and does not examine gender issues.

(27) See Steyn, "Conclusion," pp. 155-61.

(28) Many visitors to the installation at the National Museum of African art apparently assumed that the images were photographs.

(29) The result can be bitterness, even from intellectual leaders of the anti-apartheid movement. Breyten Breytenbach recently described the 'new South Africa' as follows: "...beyond the initial phase of transition it soon became clear that the One Nation promoted or promised by the new regime was premised on hegemonic Black Nationalism and a deeply held need to undo and preferably rewrite history. The claim of, "It is now our time," by the party in power, using nationalism as the last refuge of the scoundrel, plays out in practice as the rapid and ruthless enrichment of its deployed cadres at the cost of the country at large." "This existing, that arising"



(Notions of Space and Movement in Memory and Imagination)," lecture, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Berlin, October, 2009.  
[www.bpb.de/.../W40T3T,0,The\\_Rainbow\\_is\\_a\\_Smashed\\_Mirror\\_Essay.html](http://www.bpb.de/.../W40T3T,0,The_Rainbow_is_a_Smashed_Mirror_Essay.html)

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